

# Institutional Profile

Maldonado (by Alexandra Reed and Nicole Grambo)

## CERP del Este (Centro Regional de Profesores)

**Learning Community:** Most English classes range in size from 10 to 20 students. All students must pass a proficiency test before admission to the CERP English program and, as a result, their fluency tends to be very good. Due to the high demand for English teachers, public high school English teachers in Uruguay are not currently required to complete a teacher-training program at a CERP (in the departments) or the IPA (in Montevideo). As a result, many of your students at the CERP del Este may already be teaching English in private or public institutes.

**Function:** The CERP is a teacher-training institute. It is important to note that it is not a university, nor is it affiliated to any university. Upon enrolling at the CERP students choose a teaching career path (English, historia, matematicas, etc.) Although students take some common classes with their peers in Spanish such as didactics (teaching methods) and pedagogy, your students will also be enrolled in a block of English classes with classmates in their same year. These may include: History of English-Speaking Countries, History of the British Isles, Phonetics and Language, among others. All students at the CERP have a heavy course load (often taking over 30 hours of classes per week.) Many students work and have a family as well. Your students may range in age anywhere from 18 to 45 years old.

**Resources:** There are only two projectors available at the entire institute. You will need to reserve them in advance but be sure to have a back-up plan if technology fails (as it often does). English classes are often small enough to justify huddling around a laptop screen for short PowerPoint presentations. There are no printers or copy machines available at the CERP itself, but there is a shop one block away that can meet your printing needs. There is a wifi network (CEIBAL) that some students are able to access, but it is unreliable and ETAs have found it difficult/impossible to connect to this network with their own laptops.

**ETA Role:** The ETA placement at the CERP del Este started in 2011. As it is a new program, there is a lot of flexibility in what may constitute an ETA's role. Be sure to communicate expectations and goals clearly with the professors you will be working under. ETA roles may range between teaching entire classes or simply organizing short presentations/activities. One successful project implemented in 2011 was "The Writing Process" (Steps to include: Brainstorming, Prewrite, Outline, 1st draft, ETA edit, 2nd draft, peer edit, Final), in which ETAs walked 1st and 2nd year students through the process of writing a five-paragraph essay, placing a majority of the emphasis on the prewriting steps such as outlining. Students reported that writing skills are not uniformly taught in public schools, and, for some, this was the first time they had been advised to brainstorm or outline prior to writing. We recommend making sure all prewriting steps are done in-class and then turned in to ETAs to ensure that students are in fact completing these steps.

**Additional Notes:** Many professors outside of the English department are eager to invite ETAs to their classes. Take advantage of this opportunity! Many classes (conducted in Spanish) in history, art, sociology, etc. touch on topics related to the United States and you may have the opportunity to prepare short presentations or merely participate in discussions during these classes. You may also have the

opportunity to audit classes if you find courses that interest you. Ask the secretary at the main office for course listings (be sure to also look into this possibility at the Universidad de la Republica during the Montevideo placement).

### Escuela Primaria 56 Clemente Estable

**Learning Community:** Approximately 150 students ranging from Kindergarten through 6th grade.

**Function:** This is a *tiempo completo* school (8:00am to 3:30pm) serving a low-income neighborhood in Maldonado. Students are served breakfast, lunch and snack. In 2011 the school had a bilingual immersion program serving grades 1st-6th where students received between 2 and 4 hours of content-based instruction in each language through bilingual immersion. This program has since been discontinued nation-wide due to lack of funding.

**Resources:** No television or projector are available. All classes are equipped with a blackboard and chalk. Students all have a personal laptop (through Plan CEIBAL) but it would be ideal for an ETA to wait a few weeks before trying to implement any activity with the laptops so you may first become familiar with the common challenges of working with this tool (uncharged or lost laptops, internet server down, lack of headphones for any listening exercise.) It is possible to use the laptops but ask for advice on the feasibility of specific activities/projects from the classroom teacher.

**ETA Role:** The institution is very flexible to whatever the ETA is comfortable with. This can vary from planning short 10 minute activities, circulating through class helping students complete assignments, or teaching entire one-hour lessons. Just be sure to communicate your expectations with teachers at the beginning and they will be happy to accommodate you to whatever you feel most comfortable with.

### Escuela Primaria 99 – By Alexandra Reed

**Learning Community:** Over 300 students ranging from Pre-Kindergarten through 6th grade.

**Function:** This is a *tiempo común* school located next to the CERP in Maldonado. While free lunch is an option for students that qualify, only a small minority of students eat at the school. 99 has a morning shift and an afternoon shift--students attend only one of these shifts. Most of the teachers work one of the two shifts here, and they spend the other half of the day working in private institutions. 99 is one of the few *tiempo común* primary schools in Maldonado with an English program--each Kindergarten through 6th grade class has English 1 hour a day, 3 days a week.

**Resources:** No television or projector available. There are one or two working CD/tape players, though they are not always easy to locate. All classes are equipped with a blackboard and chalk. Students all have a personal laptop (through Plan CEIBAL). See the description under **Escuela 56** for more information about laptop usage. There is also a small bookshelf of English books, posters, and other resources that are occasionally utilized by the English teachers.

**ETA Role:** The different shifts (morning and afternoon) can make it a challenge to work in 99; when I was at 99, I visited all 12 different classes (6 per shift) once a week (two full days/wk). At any given time, there were 4 different English teachers working in the

school--they typically work 3 days a week, during just one of the two shifts. Because 99 is not a full-day school and because English classes meet only 3 times a week, the English teachers often feel pressed for time as they try to cover all the required material for the school year. In my experience as an ETA at 99, it was unrealistic to plan my own lessons and take up substantial amounts of class time, because the teachers only have 3 hours a week with the kids (in contrast, see the description of **Escuela 56's** immersion program). Limiting my classroom role to helping students one-on-one, pronouncing vocabulary, writing on the chalkboard, and otherwise serving as an extra pair of hands for the English teacher seemed to be most appreciated form of participation.

**Additional Notes:** Unlike **Escuela 56**, 99's English program is a content-based, rather than immersion, program.

## Montevideo – by Caroline Borer

### IPA – Instituto de Profesores Artigas

**Population/ Learning community.** IPA's student population consists of students over the age of 18 enrolled in a 4 year teacher training program. Students take anywhere from 8 to 11 classes a year. Their classes are divided between Common Subjects (taught in Spanish with all students at IPA) and Specific Subjects (taught in English with students of English). The students vary in age from recent high school graduates to adult learners/ current English teachers returning to school to receive their teaching certification. As the classes at IPA function in shifts (morning, afternoon, and evening), it's hard to calculate how many students attend IPA, but 1st year classes are significantly bigger than 4th year classes due to drop outs. For example, a 1st year English language class may have 40 students and a 4th year class only 10.

**Function of Institution.** IPA's function is to train future teachers, not only in English but other secondary subjects such as Biology, Spanish, Philosophy, History, Chemistry, etc. Each career is 4 years, and although the Institution is tertiary education, IPA is not considered at the University level (even though this is a current debate with the Uruguayan education system). The institution is public and free for Uruguayans.

**Resources.** IPA has an abundance of classrooms with chalk/ whiteboards. There are two computer labs, but often they are occupied by computer technology classes. There is also a library with books and quiet place to study. Projectors, Overhead projectors, CD players, computers, and speakers are available but you must book them in advance with the office on the first floor. There is also a cafeteria to purchase food, drinks and snacks.

**ETA Role.** The ETA role is to be an native English resource for the English department. This presents the possibility of working in a variety of classes, such as Language, Linguistics, Phonetics, Didactics, Literature, History, or Culture and Civilization. When working within the classes, there is the opportunity to present mini-lessons pertaining to language or culture that complement the course's curriculum, providing cultural, literary or technological resources, or simply being present in class to increase interaction with a native speaker. Also, there is the option of starting conversation or writing workshops outside of the scheduled class time. In addition to being a native speaking resource, the past 3 years, the ETA has also held the responsibility of organizing the Simposio "Voces Estudiantiles". This Symposium is open to all those enrolled in foreign language teacher formation both at IPA and other CERP across Uruguay. It is a day of student presentations about language, culture and

learning. All presentations are in the target language.

**Suggestions.** If starting a conversation/ writing club or promoting an event like the Symposium, it is best to start early. If you have a clear idea of what you want to do, start promoting it as soon as you can. The best way to publicize (aside from posters) is to visit each class individually and talk to the students personally about your ideas. They will be more interested and invested once they meet you. Also, when organizing anything outside of class, Facebook is a great medium to reach your students because not everyone checks their email regularly. Also, if you have an idea to incorporate into a class, voice it to the teacher. The teachers at IPA are very open and accustomed to working with ETAs and willing to collaborate with you.

## **PADs (Profesores Articuladores Departamentales)- Departmental/ National**

**Population/ Learning Community.** PADs oversee English language learning in secondary schools. Secondary schools range from grades 1-3 (ciclo basico) and 4-6 (bachillerato). Grades 1-3 are equivalent to grades 7-9 in the USA, and grades 4-6 are equivalent to grades 10-12. Although ciclo basico is compulsory, bachillerato is not; therefore, English classes in bachillerato are fewer hours with fewer students. Also, once reaching bachillerato, students must choose an orientation, such as biology, art/ expression, law, agriculture, etc. These orientations concentrate more on the specific subjects of the orientation (i.e. biology has more science classes than law). These orientations are supposed to prepare students for their course of study at the university level.

**Function.** PADs function under the umbrella organization of Inspección Ingles, which oversees all English language learning in public schools. The role of a PAD is to observe English teachers, identify teachers that may need more support/ teacher formation, provide professional development opportunities, and act as a general resource and support for secondary English teachers. Although the department of Montevideo has 7 PADs, all other departments only have one.

**Resources.** Although PADs have access to the professional development, technological, and literary resources of Inspección Ingles, they typically function out of one designated high school. Therefore, concrete resources such as projectors or CD players are only available if that specific high school has them. If you need these types of resources for your work, it is best to ask the high school beforehand.

**ETA role.** The ETA role with the PADs is varied. The ETA is essentially a native English resource for all the schools the PAD is in charge of. This means that the ETA will probably work in multiple schools with multiple teachers. Past ETA activities have included:

- classroom visits: (Q & A sessions with students; discussing/ presenting a cultural topic; working with a group over an extended period of time on a specific project, such as a book or magazine; moderating a debate on the current thematic unit of the class)
- hosting conversation clubs
- visiting the coordination hours of the secondary English teachers
- giving talks to secondary English teachers about: culture, phonetics, foreign language methods and practices

**Suggestions.** Voice your strengths, weaknesses, and interests to the PAD early on.

PADs are used to collaborating with many different teachers about many different topics. Don't be shy to share your ideas with them. Most likely, once the PAD hears your ideas, they will know exactly what school or teacher to pair you with. Also, when working with PADs, you will work at many different schools, often only once or twice. Be sure to always introduce yourself to the administration, or at least the adscripta (guidance counselor), when you arrive at the school. You are a guest, and although the school is grateful you are there, you should make sure they know who you are, who you are working with, and why you are there.